



ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

Page I:

What's New, Spring 2013

MVLC Family Legal Advice
Service Expanding

Page II:

Phase I of MJC Expansion
Complete

Page III:

Volunteer Spotlight:
Atty. Shannon Lee Denney

Thanks For A Year of Service
to the MJC!

Page IV:

MJC Family Grows, Meet
Atty. Mary Ferwerda

MJC Hours and Info

THE MILWAUKEE JUSTICE CENTER
Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 North 9th Street, Rm. G9
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Editor:
Justin A. Metzger
justin.metzger@wicourts.gov

What's New, Spring 2013

By: Dawn R. Caldart

A lot has been happening here at the Milwaukee Justice Center. We've added to the MJC team, and a member of our team has added to her family.

First, I want to give a big welcome to Atty. Mary Ferwerda, our new Attorney Supervisor, who will be supervising many of our MJC clinics.

Also, I want to welcome Janelle Schmidt, our new Clerical Assistant, to the MJC team. She will be managing the intake of

clients, and helping manage the intake data, for all MJC clinics.

We're also excited to announce MJC Legal Director Atty. Ayame Metzger and her husband, Justin, welcomed their first child, Emmett, into their family on June 5th. Congratulations to them!

Finally, a farewell to Alyse Pfeil, our Americorps Public Ally. Her appointment ends in July, and we wish her all the best, and thank her for her contributions to the MJC! ●



Atty. Dawn R. Caldart
MJC Executive Director

MVLC, Foley Inns, Partner to Bring New Service to MJC

By: Justin A. Metzger

Family law has long been a key area of service the Milwaukee Justice Center has focused on providing to the community. Now, with a new partnership between the MJC, the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic (MVLC), and the Leander J. Foley, Jr. Matrimonial American Inn of Court, the MJC can provide family legal advice, in addition to its usual forms assistance, on a daily basis.

Until now, all legal advice services were provided only on Thursday and Friday afternoons from 2:00-4:00pm. Now, with the support of the Foley Inns and Marquette, additional times have been added Monday through Wednesday from 1:30-3:30pm.

"We have gotten very positive feedback from our members," Foley Inns president Atty. Rebecca Millenbach, Esq. (Nelson & Davis LLC) said. "I cannot exclaim enough how wonderful it is to have the instant gratification of helping someone with a legal issue."

Not only will the added services benefit Milwaukee County residents and litigants, it's also aimed at helping the Milwaukee County court system.

"We are anticipating fewer motions and DeNovo reviews will be filed because clients will be advised on the law," MJC Executive Director Atty. Dawn Caldart said. "We want to help clients make assessments on the merits of the motion." ●

Another benefit is to Marquette Law School student volunteers.

"It is an opportunity for those law student volunteers interested in family law to delve more deeply into the area and develop professional connections," MJC Attorney Supervisor Atty. Mary Ferwerda said.

Currently, clients are only seen for this clinic by referral. At the beginning of the program, only MJC volunteers, after going through a round of issue-spotting, are making those referrals. However, the goal is to encourage Family Court Commissioners, judges, the Sojourner Family Peace Center, and other, off-site MVLC clinics, refer clients to the new Family Legal Advice service. ●

**Q1 2013 a Glance...**

Clients Seen

Q1 2013: 2,751

vs. 2012: +21%

YTD: +21%

Phase I of MJC Expansion Complete

After months of planning, moving, and rearranging, the Milwaukee Justice Center expanded its floorspace for the first time since 2009 in March of 2013.

Moving from a four-spot, bank-window-style, walk-up counter to an office area allowing for up to seven work stations has allowed the MJC to further grow the number of litigants helped from 2012's record number. What's more, is the expansion has allowed a further technological upgrade to MJC services.

By: Justin A. Metzger

Where litigants needed to fill out forms by hand at the windows before, now, MJC volunteers are able to fill the forms digitally, reducing errors later on in the court process by illegible handwriting, and other issues resulting from pen-on-paper court forms.

The new setup was possible due to a server and network setup put together by Justin A. Metzger, and Milwaukee County Circuit Court Network Technical Specialist Rick McCoy. Even more instrumental was

five laptops provided by the Milwaukee County Clerk of Circuit Court's office, and five more donated by LexisNexis.

Phase II of the expansion is expected to happen in late July to early August, and will involve a complete rebuild of the facility, to complement a repurposing of the entire office, and a further doubling in available capacity to help Milwaukee's unrepresented litigants. ●

Volunteer Spotlight: Shannon Lee Denney

By: Justin A. Metzger

Atty. Shannon Lee Denney, a self-practicing attorney and 1994 graduate of the University of Oklahoma College of Law, has been volunteering with the MJC since 2012.

Shannon, a mother of two, started off her career in rural Oklahoma, working five years at the Oklahoma Department of Education, and spent the previous five years in private practice in Stigler, Oklahoma.

“People need help and don't have the direction. I have the direction and skillset to put them back to where they need to be.”
- Shannon Denney

“There were two stoplights in that entire county,” Shannon said. “They were two blocks apart, and my law office was in between those stoplights.”

Why come to Milwaukee?

I needed a change of scenery, and decided to follow family. Milwaukee is amazing in that you wouldn't think about coming here, but everyone who has come here to visit me has loved Milwaukee.

What brought you to the Milwaukee Justice Center?

I heard about what the Milwaukee Justice Center



Atty. Shannon Lee Denney, MJC Volunteer

did, and I like working with pro se litigants, and I like helping people. I also liked the fact that there's something new every day. And when clients leave, they feel a little better about what they're doing, and where they are, and that's important.

What's been rewarding about your experience at the MJC?

Volunteering at the MJC is rewarding because people need help and don't have the direction. I have the direction and skillset to put them back to where they need to be. If they're upset, I have the ability to help them out, either with a sense of humor, or just to help them feel calm. I just want them to feel they're in a better place, both legally and emotionally.

What's been the most challenging thing about volunteering at the MJC?

Learning a new court system has been the most challenging, procedurally.

The law isn't very different, but the court is. I practiced in a small county before, and Milwaukee is a lot bigger, so there are a lot more procedural issues. And if I ever need help with anything anymore, it's procedural.

Why do you feel pro bono work is important?

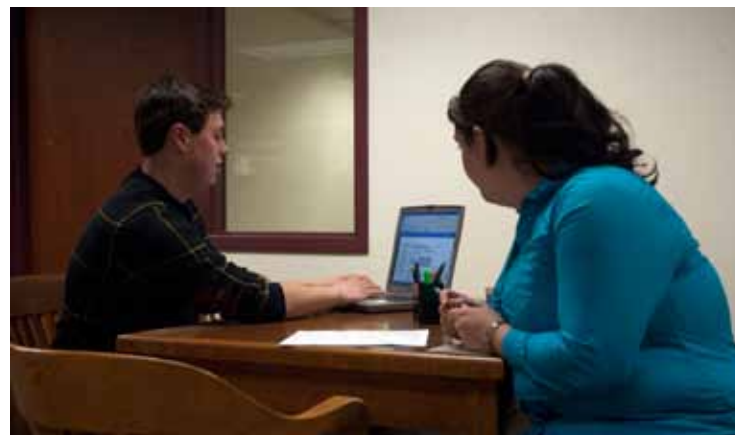
Pro bono work has always been something that's near and dear to my heart. There was a case I had in Oklahoma that I took on. It was a guardianship case. It was a distant relationship by marriage involving a deprived child. Nobody showed up for the child, so my client stood up for her.

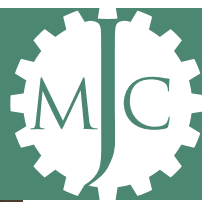
I was pregnant with my youngest daughter at the time, and my client came into the office one day and said, “I have five dollars. I know five dollars won't mean that much to you, so I crocheted you these blankets for your baby.”

I still have those blankets. And from that, I just consider helping as a way to give voice to the voiceless. ●

Thanks To Our Students and Interns For A Year of Service to the MJC Family Law Clinic!

Phoebe Amberg
Christian Bray
Chantal Couture
Keldon Crampton
Alyssa Curtis
Katherine Lodge
Diane Montgomery
Kyla Motz
Jill Muller
Mindy Nolan
Ashley Sinclair
Walter Wenzel





MJC Family Grows, Meet Atty. Mary Ferwerda

By: Justin A. Metzger

Attorney Mary Ferwerda comes to the MJC as our new, part-time Attorney Supervisor, helping manage the MJC's various clinics, and spearhead new clinic offerings.

A native of Yankton, South Dakota, 2011 graduate of Marquette Law School, and a holder of a BA in History and Education and MS in Counseling (both from Creighton University), Mary was a family teacher at a foster care group in Omaha, and moved on to education administration at both Creighton and Marquette before turning her interest to the law.

"I was working at Marquette's Office of Student Development with a program that encouraged students to consider how their own talents and leadership skills could work toward addressing the needs of the world," Mary said. "During this time, I began to discern my own career path, and chose to pursue a life-long interest in the law."

Mary was first exposed

to the MJC while serving as Student Coordinator for the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic.

"Though I was usually assigned to another site, I did serve as a coordinator at the MJC on occasion," Mary said. "I was impressed by the services offered by the MJC, and the staff whom I met."

Now, Mary says she loves coming to work every day, and is impressed by the commitment of the MJC's volunteers, and the collaboration of the various partners that make the MJC work.

In addition to her work with the MJC, Mary also serves as a mediator focusing on family and interpersonal disputes. She lives in Bay View with her partner, cat, and dog. ●



Family Law Clinic Hours:

Monday - Wednesday
8:30am - 12:00pm
1:00pm - 4:00pm

Thursday - Friday
8:30am - 12:00pm

Brief Legal Advice Clinic Hours:

Thursday - Friday
2:00pm - 4:00pm

To Make an Appointment:
(414) 278-2912
(Divorce Part 2 only)

MJC Executive Director:

Dawn R. Caldart, J.D.

MJC Legal Director:

Ayame D.C. Metzger, J.D.

Attorney Supervisor

Mary Ferwerda, J.D.

Special Projects Mgr.:

Alyse Pfeil

Milwaukee County Courthouse
901 North 9th Street, Rm. G9
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Editor:
Justin A. Metzger
justin.metzger@wicourts.gov

Thank you to all of our
volunteers and supporters!